

“LESS-TRANSLATED” REGIONAL LANGUAGES?
INTER- AND INTRA-PERIPHERAL TRANSLATIONS
IN WALLONIA (1870–1940)

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ABSTRACT

This article aims to open new avenues of thinking toward the “less-translated” dimension of regional minority languages by considering not only translations from and into major languages (verticality), but also from and into other minority languages (horizontality), namely inter- and intra-peripheral translations. This will be illustrated by the study of ultraminor(ized) Walloon literature in translation in the first phase of regional identity construction. Walloon literature from Belgium lacks legitimacy and is minorized both in the national and international frameworks. However, in the period between 1870 and 1940, literary translation practices from and into Walloon (oral and written) occurred incrementally, not only vertically but also horizontally. Walloon inter- and intra-peripheral translations—as well as the extension of the traditional written printed corpus—will showcase alternative literary circulation paths for regional minority cultures and illustrate the relevance of investigating the balance of translation flows on a larger scale.

KEYWORDS: Walloon literature, translation history, ultraminor, regionalism, less-translated languages

Recent studies have shown that at the end of the nineteenth century, in reaction to national centralization, regional identity movements emerged all over Western Europe (in Galicia, Catalonia, Occitania, Brittany, Wallonia, Flanders, Friesland, Wales, Ireland, etc.).¹ These movements all represent language and cultural minorities (minorized at different phases

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of nation-building). Obviously, such European subnational cultures did not emerge in isolation. Although they took various forms and resulted in different configurations (from cultural and language defense to political self-determination), these movements of decentralization attempted to define and propagate (more or less successfully) homogeneous regional (identity) discourses through cultural transfers, including translations. However, not only did they enter into a “vertical” dialogue (i.e., in relation to and mediated by the dominant national culture), but they also opened a “horizontal” dialogue (in relation to and mediated by other dominated cultures), borrowing and translating from each other, adapting and connecting to one another, as well as promoting each other in numerous ways.² Such cross-border activities were enacted by mediators, who served as bridges or gatekeepers, and designed new sets of cultural practices while also envisioning alternative European spatializations. There is ample evidence of such inter-peripheral, transregional, networks, and agents, but little is known about their materialization.

Through the empirical study of the circulation of the ultraminor(ized) Walloon literary in- and extratranslations³ between 1870 and 1940, this article will address the neglected regional minority level in the historical study of literary circulation and organization. By taking into consideration not only the traditional vertical point of view but also the horizontal one, or, in other words, the inter- and intra-peripheral (written and oral) translation relationships, it will open up new avenues of thinking toward the so-called “less-translated” dimension of regional minority languages and illustrate the relevance of investigating *the balance of* translation flows on a larger scale.

State of the Art

Historical academic disciplines have often neglected the regional level—that is, related to historical regions and identity movements—to such an extent that the terms “region” and “regionalism” are more often used in global and political history to refer to supranational configurations (such as the EU, East Asia, and the Balkans).⁴ The subnational region is traditionally viewed as a vestige of a premodern era, or as a failed version of nationalism, forcing regionalisms to the periphery of nationalism studies. Furthermore, the term “regionalism” is somewhat problematic when referring to regions such as Flanders or Catalonia, which see themselves as “nations” and have developed “nationalist,” and not “regionalist” movements. The region is thus a diffuse

concept that entertains an ambiguous relationship (of both support and opposition) with the nation-state and that needs to be reassessed urgently. In the historical subfield of European regionalisms, the largest majority of studies have been dedicated to the 1960–70s waves of regionalism because of their impact on current political parties and European integration. Surprisingly, fewer publications focus on earlier regional movements from the nineteenth century, even though these are crucial to capture the “birth” of regionalisms. Moreover, regionalisms have mostly been approached in isolation, in comparisons, or from a vertical perspective, regardless, therefore, of the regions’ historical intersections, the concrete way in which they crossed each other’s routes in the past, for example, through translations.

A notable exception is the pioneering work of A.-M. Thiesse, *Écrire la France, Le mouvement littéraire régionaliste de langue française entre la Belle-Époque et la Libération* (1991), which investigated the networks of “régionalisme transrégional” within the French literary field.⁵ Recently, new comparative approaches have provided broader overviews of European regional dynamics, and have acknowledged the transnational dimension of regionalisms by highlighting logics of mirroring and mutual influences.⁶ Nevertheless, they have paid little attention to the circulation of literature and to material and human transregional interconnectedness, that is, to translations and mediators.

In contrast, global cultural history focuses on interconnectedness but has neglected the regional level. Following the spatial turn, global history has emerged as a field of research that departs from Eurocentric approaches and aims to go beyond comparisons and methodological nationalism to trace transnational encounters on different scales.⁷ Within this framework, the so-called transregional studies seek to produce new narratives that are able to address the space-making aspects of connections between larger supra-national regions in a global(ized) world (i.e., between the national and the global). Nonetheless, by putting aside any predefined boundaries, considered to be porous and fluid (be they local, regional, or national), these approaches give no attention to historical European regionalisms.

Surprisingly, the discipline of translation studies has devoted little attention to regional minority languages, perhaps because most research on minority language translation is not written in English.

For the impartial observer it is fair to say that the relationship between translation and minority languages has been a relatively neglected topic for much of the existence of translation studies. Translation theory anthologies rarely included contributions from minority language

perspectives and little or no allowance was made for the fact that attitudes towards translation might significantly alter depending on whether the source or target language was in a majority or minority.⁸

Only a few studies have examined the paradoxical role played by translation for the sustainability of regional languages—as both a source of inequality and a means to overcome it—but they mainly look at regional languages in relation to state languages.⁹ Transnational literary circulation has mainly been explored in the subfield of the sociology of translation wherein power relationships between languages are calculated through the directionality and intensity of translation flows on a global scale.¹⁰ These studies, however, tend to focus more often on central languages (such as English, French, Spanish, or German).

As the circulation of minor literature obviously involves more than translation itself, the notion of cultural transfer—which refers to diverse phenomena of circulation, transformation, and reinterpretation of cultural and textual goods across geo-cultural areas—is particularly relevant to this study.¹¹ The term has penetrated the subfield of translation history where it serves as an umbrella concept covering a great variety of translation-like discursive and institutional techniques—adaptation, summary, and plagiarism constitute examples of the former, whereas journals, associations, and publishing houses are instances of the latter—occurring between and across language communities.¹² These approaches examine in particular the transformations that have occurred in the process, thus the transferred object, as well as the transferring agents, that is, the mediators. The mediator category has long been relegated to the shadows of cultural history but has recently emerged as a key agent for the circulation and organization of cultural life, including the creation of literary and artistic repertoires.¹³

This article therefore addresses various gaps in the abovementioned fields, in particular (1) the lack of consideration for concrete entanglements in the history of regionalisms, (2) the marginalization of the regional level and of language crossing in global history, and (3) the insufficient attention given to regional languages and horizontal relationships in translation studies.

Conceptual Considerations: the Regional, the Minor, and the Less Translated

Before proceeding with the case study, it is interesting to circumscribe what is understood as a minority or regional language. In the *European Charter*

for *Regional or Minority Languages*—whose objectives are, among others, the recognition and the respect of these languages as an expression of cultural wealth, their promotion, and the facilitation of their use—regional and minority languages are used interchangeably:

Regional or minority languages [...] are languages traditionally used within a given territory of a state by nationals of that state who form a group numerically smaller than the rest of the state's population; they are different from the official language(s) of that state, and they include neither dialects of the official language(s) of the state nor the languages of migrants.¹⁴

If this definition makes no difference between regional and minority languages, it does distinguish them from dialects. This can be highly problematic because the difference between a language and a dialect commonly lies in its degree of recognition—as the old saying goes, *a language is a dialect with an army and navy*. Moreover, the ratification of this European charter is a *national* matter, and is thereby subject to political interests. As a result, although considered an endangered language by UNESCO, the Walloon language is not protected under the Charter (because Belgium did not ratify it). The same goes for Flemish. France signed it but did not ratify the charter, contrarily to Spain, which recognized, among others, Catalan, Galician, Basque, and Asturian; Switzerland recognized Franco-provençal, among others, the United Kingdom, Scott and Welsh, and the Netherlands, Frisian.

In the field of translation studies, various scholars have attempted to give a less restrictive definition of the term minority. For Laurence Venuti (1998), for instance,

[...] minority is understood [...] to mean a cultural or political position that is subordinate [...] This position is occupied by languages and literatures that lack prestige or authority, the non standard and the non canonical, what is not spoken or read much by a hegemonic culture. Yet minorities also include the nations and social groups that are affiliated with these languages and literatures, the politically weak or underrepresented, the colonized and the disenfranchised, the exploited and the stigmatized.¹⁵

This larger definition includes many more minority groups—notably in the context of postcolonial studies—but goes beyond the scope of linguistics.

In an earlier work, Michael Cronin observes that no attempt has been made to account for the inequality of relations between people, races, and languages in Europe, something which Occitanic historian Robert Lafont refers to as *colonialisme interne*.¹⁶ Cronin does not mention the “regional” but states that “minority is the expression of a relation, not an essence” and thus that all languages are potentially minority languages.¹⁷ A literary field can also be minor in one context, and major in another. French literature from Belgium until the 1960s epitomizes this phenomenon: it used to be major in Belgium (compared to Flemish literature) but minor in the Francophonie.¹⁸ In its turn, Flemish literature used to be dominated, but yet dominant compared to Walloon literature. For Cronin, a factor that informs the relational position of minority languages is the pressure to translate, as “the continued existence of the language and the self-perception and self-confidence of its speakers are intimately bound up with translation effects.”¹⁹ Therefore, he makes a figure-ground distinction between, on the one hand, languages that are “target-language [TL] intensive,” exemplified by the English language, “where there is intense translation activity from English into other languages but where there is markedly less translation traffic in the opposite direction” and, on the other hand, languages that are “source-language [SL] intensive languages,” defined as “any minority language where translations are largely from other source languages that enjoy majority status.”²⁰ In 2005, Branchadell coined the term “Less-translated languages,” that is, “all those languages that are less often the source of translation in the international exchange of linguistic goods, regardless of the number of people using these languages.” According to Branchadell, less-translated languages are joined by a “shared subordination” and “would be the *contrary* of [Cronin’s] source-language intensive languages (not necessarily target-intensive).” The latter is a rather ambiguous statement since Cronin explicitly associates SL intensive languages with minority languages, and TL intensive languages with dominant majority languages.²¹ In any case, one might expect that “*less-translated* languages” would count more intranlations than extranlations, and that this notion would relate to “*less translating* languages,” which count more extranlations than intranlations. But in fact, the “less-translated” dimension of languages does not address the relative number or frequency of in- and extranlations, but contrasts, in absolute numbers, with “*more-translated languages*,” such as English. What we are still missing thereby is a *relational* view on translation flows for minority languages. This is what this article aims to do: to investigate the in- and extranlations flows of a so-called “less-translated language” in an ultraminor context. Translation indeed plays a paradoxical role for minority

languages, whose visibility depends on their translation *into* dominant languages, and whose survivance rests on their translation *from* dominant languages, accentuating the painful reminder of the existence of asymmetrical relations of power.²² As Cronin puts it, "The role of translation in [the] process of linguistic impoverishment is profoundly ambiguous. Translation is both predator and deliverer, enemy and friend."²³ More precisely, minority languages "must translate continually in order to retain their viability and relevance as living languages. Yet, translation itself may in fact endanger the very specificity of those languages that practice it, particularly in a situation of diglossia."²⁴ Translation is in fact not always necessary to ensure communication and might display a highly symbolical function.

Translations, as well as other types of transfers, are thus linked with minority identity and culture development. The affirmation of regional cultural identities in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries indeed both drew on and fueled an intensification of intra- and international transfers, including translations, in the fields of art and literature.²⁵ The border crossing of cultural and literary representations enabled emerging cultures to become perceived, both inside and beyond their boundaries, as "imagined communities."²⁶ In other words, the visibility and the very existence of minor or regional languages and literature depend on import and export transfer and translation strategies. As a privileged mode of transfer, translation appears as a crucial aspect of a cultural and literary system's survival and maintenance, notably by developing "cultural repertoires," namely the interactive inventory of texts, agents, norm, and functions that rules and organizes cultural spaces.²⁷ As such, minority language cultures are "translation cultures par excellence as they are heavily dependent on translation to supply informational needs in the language," and consequently on translation policies as well.²⁸

As State policies with regard to translation are invariably part of the politics to enhance and promote national culture, they imply import as well as export strategies [...] for peripheral and semi-peripheral countries, the very existence of their national literature on the international scene depends on such policies.²⁹

Finally, the broader transfer perspective is useful to include the oral dimension of minority and regional languages by shedding light on nonwritten material. Traditional genres in Walloon such as tales, pasqueyes (satirical sketches or songs), cramignons (dancing songs), and most of all, theater, are indeed impregnated with orality. With the "revival" of Walloon literature from the 1850s, novels and poetry came to the fore, but the other forms remained.

In sum, in this article, minority will be seen as a relation, rather than as an essence, and will be linked to the term regional, that, as mentioned earlier, refers to its historical (European) use linked with the regional substate spatial delimitation—between the local and the national. Horizontal translations from and into other minority languages will be called inter-peripheral translations, as opposed to translations from and into central (major) languages. Wallonia will even be considered ultraminor—that is, in Branchadell's sense—languages that are not presently used as a majority language in any state.³⁰

Case Study: Literary Translations from and into Walloon Languages

WALLONIA: SOME FACTS

Walloon is a Romance language or dialect that has been spoken in the south of Belgium and in some areas of northern France. Walloon itself is divided into four dialects developed in four distinct zones (central, eastern, western, and southern) and is also a generical term to refer to all “popular idioms of Wallonia,” thus other languages of the same group also spoken in Wallonia: Picard, Lorrain, and Champenois.³¹ We should therefore speak of Walloon languages rather than Walloon language. Walloon languages started to decline after World War I (WWI) when public schools provided French-speaking education to all children, inducing a denigration of Walloon and the punishment of its use at school, as was the case in many dialectal areas in France. Since the middle of the twentieth century, generational transmission of the language has decreased, resulting in Walloon almost becoming an endangered language. Until WWII, however, Wallonia was a diglossic space, with a French-speaking elite, a bilingual bourgeoisie and a majority of the population speaking varieties of Walloon. This diglossic configuration is not without reminding the one of the north of the country, at the same time.³²

In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Wallonia enjoyed economic growth, leading the industrial revolution in Belgium (mostly thanks to the exploitation of coal and steel). Like many other places in Europe, Wallonia saw the emergence of a typical late romantic identity quest with a rediscovery (or a reconstruction) of a Walloon patrimony. Evidence of this quest—orchestrated by a heterogeneous Walloon movement in reaction to a Flemish emancipation movement—can be found in the creation of

certain institutions (such as the *Société liégeoise de littérature wallonne*, *Musée de la Vie wallonne*, *Walloon Congresses*), publication outlets (for instance, journals like *L'Âme wallonne* or *Wallonia*), symbols (flags and anthems), the attempts to standardize the Walloon languages ("système Feller"), or the organization of salons and exhibitions of Walloon art (Charleroi 1911, Mons 1913). Significantly, these various attempts at cultural legitimization were accompanied by a dynamic of intra- and international transfers, including translations: Bosquétia (1833–1906), for example, was a writer, chronicler, and librettist who used to adapt plays by Racine and Molière into Walloon. From Paris, Maurice Des Ombiaux (1868–1943) strove to define and promote Walloon art and literature in international journals, not only in French but also in Flemish. Emma Lambotte (1878–1973), French translator of Walloon poetry, not only took an active part in Walloon Congresses which debated on Walloon racial and cultural identity (as opposed to the Flemish one), but was also an influential *salonnière* in Antwerp, bringing together French writers, Francophone Flemish artists, Flemish activists, and Walloon philologists.

Nevertheless, at the turn of the twentieth century, while the Flemish Movement started to enjoy the fruits of its linguistic and cultural fight, the Walloon movement only accumulated failures and frustrations.³³ Indeed, the main objectives of this heterogeneous Walloon movement, expressed at the Walloon Congress of 1905, were the following: cultural and literary emancipation, political autonomy, preservation and development of Walloon language, and French as the national language. The language claims were obviously paradoxical, or at least complex. Most representatives of the Walloon movement wanted not only to maintain French at the national and international levels as the language of culture and social emancipation, but also to preserve Walloon(s) at the regional and local levels, as an "identity" and communicational language. Similarly, they wanted to safeguard the position of Flemish(es) at the regional and local levels in the north. In other words, the Walloon movement defended a kind of double diglossia, whereas the Flemish movement was fighting for a bilingual French–Flemish Belgium, ignoring completely the mere existence of Walloon language(s). On a literary ground, the Walloon movement aspired, on the one hand, to develop French-speaking literature and, on the other hand, to protect and promote Walloon (dialect) literature that had a rather popular reputation, but that was experimenting a kind of modern revival.

In light of these criteria, it is easy to claim that this Walloon project failed, since the country has been officially bilingual with French and Flemish as official languages since 1898 (the equality law of 1898 referred

to "*Vlaamse taal/Langue flamande*" [Flemish language] and not "Dutch"), and later trilingual (French, Dutch, and German). Walloon nowadays is a nearly dead language, while the cultural identity of Wallonia seems to be weak, if not alienated, due to a perceived lack of a proper language, of founding myths and of canonized literature and art.³⁴ Walloon culture and literature are recognized neither beyond nor within the regional borders. In terms of political autonomy, Wallonia has enjoyed its own regional power since the 1980s, but regionalization happened when the region had started to decline economically, which effectively limited its potential to promote a strong regional identity.

MARGINALIZATION OF WALLOON LITERATURES AND LANGUAGES IN THE ACADEMIA

Research on Belgian literatures has traditionally been structured along a linguistic axis, devoting itself to either Flemish or Francophone Belgian literature. In so doing, it has systematically marginalized Walloon (or Walloon-inspired) literature, going so far as to argue for its abandonment in favor of the study of Francophone literature.³⁵ With the exception of a limited number of works and anthologies, dialectal Walloon literature, as well as related issues of literary diglossia, has not been addressed since the 1980s. On a socio- or politico-linguistic level, despite the fact that Walloon intellectuals were still debating the choice of a literary and political language for Wallonia, most researchers have regarded the francization of Wallonia and the irreversible abandonment of heterogeneous Romance dialects as a logical and unproblematic evolution against the advance of the Flemish movement within a mainly "francophile" Walloon community.³⁶

If a little number of historians have since examined the political and ethno-cultural dimensions of the Walloon movement and have attempted to sketch a historical evolution of Walloon regional and political identity, it has mostly been done from an internal francophone and mono-disciplinary point of view, following the traditional line of thought that the concepts of regionalism or nationalism contradict the very idea of intercultural exchanges. Finally, scholarly interest in intercultural practices within Belgium, mainly from a translation studies perspective, has focused on French-Flemish exchanges, thereby disregarding specific issues related to the inherently diglossic nature of the Walloon cultural space.

CORPUS CHALLENGES

In this context of ultraminor(ization), the constitution of a corpus constitutes the first challenge. To begin with, the UNESCO *Index Translationum* indicates zero occurrence of Walloon ex- and intranlations. This means that Walloon in- and extranlations are not centralized and recognized, or "assumed" in such a way that they could be shared with the UNESCO.³⁷ Besides, Walloon in- and extranlations are not always indexed as such in national databases, or they are recognized as French rather than Walloon translations. Correspondingly, we have only found and listed a limited number of translations from various national databases, namely the Chiroux library database (Liège), the *Archives et Musée de la littérature* (Brussels), and UNICAT (Union Catalogue of Belgian Libraries). Another explanation for the small number of translations in such databases is that they mainly list written, printed, and published translations, whereas the ultraminor Walloon literary space was not situated in an institutional framework able to financially focus on the publication of Walloon literature. Other channels, for example, journals such as *La Vie wallonne* or *Wallonia*, circulated Walloon literature in translations but have never been uncovered. As a result, for this study, the corpus needs to be extended, firstly toward oral literature thanks to the publication of *Littérature wallonne; table alphabétique des ouvrages littéraires wallons (théâtre, poésie, prose, travaux divers)* by Joseph Closset, on the occasion of the Brussels 1910 international exposition.³⁸ In collaboration with the editors of the *Annuaire de la société liégeoise de littérature wallonne*—a journal published by the *Société liégeoise de littérature wallonne*, which would become *La Société de langue et de littérature wallonnes*—Closset listed Walloon ex-and intranlations from 1870 to 1910, including translations of theater, poetry, and songs. What is complex is that this work not only lists translations collected in books (and mainly published in Liège), but also single translations published in journals or offprints (mainly in the *Annuaire*), as well as translations that are not published (or at least not accessible). Finally, our corpus is also based on one chapter by Walloon writer and professor Albert Maquet, entitled *La littérature en langue wallonne et l'étranger* (1996).³⁹ To our knowledge, this chapter is the only one to make an effort to list Walloon in- and extranlations.

Furthermore, the corpus also lists retranslations, reeditions, and self-translations—as typical literary practice in minority cultures occurs in a context of diglossia—and other transfer types (bilingual editions, glossaries, etc.). This also complexifies the counting. In short, our corpus is thus fragmentary and nonexhaustive. Much more archive work would be necessary

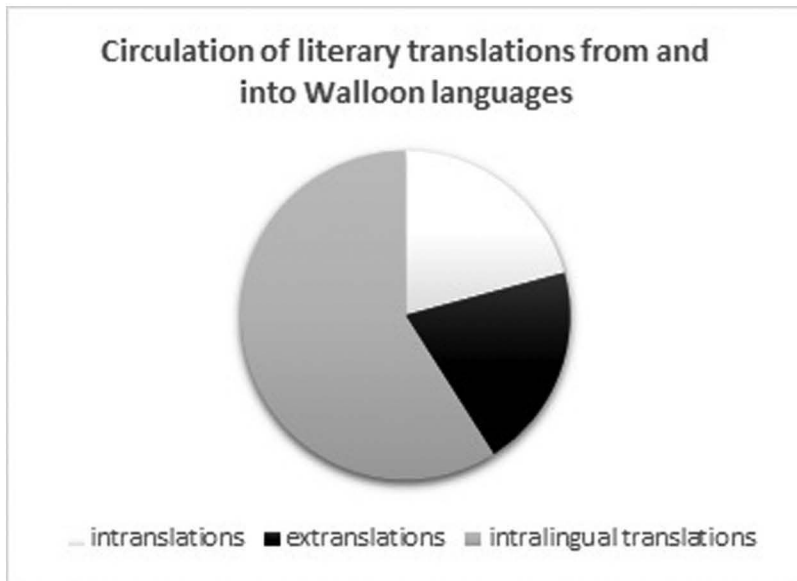


FIGURE 1:

to reach exhaustiveness, but the corpus nonetheless provides a good sample of translations from and into Walloon in the period between 1870 and 1940.

By crossing these different sources, I have found 144 in- and extranlations, from which one can extract thirty intranlations, twenty-nine extranlations, and eighty-five intralingual translations, by which I mean from one Walloon into another. Such instances include translations from Picard into Walloon, for example, but also from Walloon from Liège to Walloon from Nivelles or Namur, and so on. In this respect, Walloon literary translation practices do not seem to radically correspond to TL or SL intensive languages. But further investigation is needed to compensate for the incompleteness of the corpus. The distribution of in- and extranlations as well as of intralingual translations is represented in Figure 1.

LITERARY EXTRANLATIONS

Out of the twenty-nine extranlations listed, twenty-four are translations from Walloon into central languages, mostly French. Interestingly, two of them are translations into German, namely translations of Nicolas Defrecheux's poetry by Albert Wächter and Hans Nolte, both in 1908. The other five are extranlations from Walloon into other minority languages, that

is, inter-peripheral translations: three translations into Flemish and two into Occitan. That French was the main target language is not surprising in view of the hypercentralization of French literature in the international context, and the national framework of diglossia, with French as the language of the elite and culture. For translations into peripheral languages, Occitan as the target language is easy to explain: Occitan literature, with the international recognition of Frédéric Mistral (1830–1914), founding member of the *Félibres* and winner of the Nobel Prize for his dialectal work *Mirèio*, was a model for Walloon literary development. Contacts existed between both literatures, as evidenced in Mistral's letter to Walloon writer and translator Georges Willame (1863–1917) on 20 June 1892, inviting peripheral regions (depending on the same French center) to connect through the distance: "Les félibres du Midi et les Wallons du Nord, poursuivant le même but et sacrifiant au même dieu, feraient chose utile et fraternelle en se suivant des yeux à travers la distance qui les sépare."⁴⁰ (The *Félibres* of the South and the Walloons of the North, pursuing the same goal and sacrificing to the same god, would do a useful and fraternal thing by keeping an eye on each other across the distance that separates them.)

The case of Flemish as a target language raises more questions. Why is it, in such a little country as Belgium, that there are so little connections between dialectal Walloon and Flemish literature? In fact, but for a few exceptions, the partisans of Flemish literature and languages did not want to be assimilated with Wallonia, probably by fear of seeing Flemish relegated to the status of local dialect rather than viewed as a potential national language. There are few testimonies of connections between both dialectal literary regions.

The most translated authors are the great Walloon authors from the "Walloon literary revival" movement, namely Nicolas Defrecheux (1825–74) and Henri Simon (1856–1999). This means that an effort was made to present Walloon abroad less as a historical literary language, but as a modern literature, conveying a modern regional identity. However, it is the same few titles that are translated and retranslated: two poems by Henri Simon, *Li pan dè bon Diu* and *Li mwèrt di l'âbe*, and two songs by Nicolas Defrecheux, *L'avez-v' veyou passer?* and *Leyiz m'plorer*.

In the same way, the reception and production of Walloon literature in translation outside of Wallonia should be studied in depth, firstly because the translations do not always have the intended effect, especially when it comes to theater. In *L'Art musical* of 15 June 1890, critic A. Landely described the performance of Hamal's *Li voyèdje di Chauffontaine*, adapted in French by De Fleurigny for the *Théâtre des Nouveautés* in Paris:

Déjà, en wallon, ce devait être peu. En français, ce n'est vraiment pas assez. L'interprétation, confiée à Mmes Zelo-Duran, Bastin, Neyt, MM. Thys et Charvet, ne manque ni de verve ni de bonne humeur. Suffira-t-elle pour acclimater Hamal parmi nous, c'est douteux. *Le Voyage de Chaudfontaine* ne semble pas absolument à sa place au théâtre dit des Nouveautés.⁴¹

(In Walloon, that must have been little. In French, it is really not enough. The performance, entrusted to Mrs. Zelo-Duran, Bastin, Neyt, Mr. Thys and Charvet, lacks neither verve nor good spirits. Will it be enough to make Hamal popular among us, it's doubtful. *Le Voyage de Chaudfontaine* does not seem to be absolutely suited to the Théâtre des Nouveautés.)

A second reason to explore the production and reception of extranlations is because they might be the result of random meetings and opportunities, the fruit of very small human networks involving agents such as Jean Haust (1868–1945), and supported and (maybe disproportionately) relayed in the source culture, that is, Wallonia.⁴² Haust was committed to the promotion and circulation of Walloon literature and language: he published French–Walloon dictionaries, and was an anthologist and French translator of Walloon literature. As secretary of the *Société de langue et littérature wallonnes* from 1897 to 1927, he encouraged translations from and into Walloon by organizing Walloon translation contests. However, as a translator, he showcased a real philological purism, privileging glossaries over translations, and reeditions over new translations, thereby demonstrating an “essentialist” source-oriented strategy that puts Walloon to the fore, but makes it difficult for it to be read outside of Wallonia by a broader, nonexpert, readership.

Let us go back to one of the two German extranlations: Albert Wächter, professor in Cottbus (Brandenburg), went to Liège for a university summer school where he discovered the Flemish translations of Nicolas Defrecheux by August Cuppens (1900). Inspired by this discovery, he made a German translation of four poems by Nicolas Defrecheux, the two first probably via the Flemish translation: *Lèytz-m' polorer* (1853)/ *Lass mich weinen*, and *L'avez-v'v vèyou passer?* (1856)/ *Sagt mir, wohin die Holde schwand*, *Tot seû* (1856) / *Ganz allein* and *Tot Hossant* (1857)/ *Wiegenlied*.⁴³ This initiative was largely supported and promoted by the *Société* that published the translations in the *Annuaire* in 1908 as well as in an offprint introduced by Jean Haust: *Quatre pieces lyriques de Nicolas Defrecheux traduites en allemand* (1908).⁴⁴ This random translation was received, in Wallonia or at least for Haust, author of

the following fragment, as an opportunity to make a representative of the Walloon soul radiate abroad.

Nous avons eu le plaisir de faire la connaissance de M. Wachter au mois d'Août dernier. Venu à Liège pour suivre les Cours de vacances organisés à l'Université, il lut l'article de Cuppens et s'éprit à son tour de ce lyrisme si pur et si simplement humain. Il étudia le petit volume qui renferme les vers de notre bon poète et, de retour dans sa patrie, il nous adressa la traduction rythmée de quatre pièces qui l'avaient particulièrement touché. Nous remercions bien cordialement M. le D. Wachter de cet hommage délicat et spontané qu'il a rendu à notre Lyrique populaire. Des juges compétents ont lu ces imitations; à l'unanimité, ils ont reconnu que l'auteur avait heureusement surmonté, les difficultés de sa tâche et que ses traductions, pour être parfois un peu libres, étaient dignes de l'original. La Société, estimant que la publication de ces pièces servira la mémoire du poète wallon, en a décidé l'impression. Nous reproduisons en regard le texte de Nicolas Defrecheux, orthographié selon notre système officiel. Texte et traduction seront insérés prochainement dans l'une des grandes revues littéraires de l'Allemagne et, de la sorte, se répandra au loin le renom de celui qui incarne si purement l'Âme rêveuse de la Wallonie.⁴⁵

(We had the pleasure to meet Mr. Wachter last August. He came to Liège to attend the University's summer courses. He read Cuppens' article and became enamored of this lyricism so pure and so simply human. He studied the small volume containing the verses of our good poet and, on his return to his homeland, he sent us the rhythmic translation of four pieces that had particularly touched him. We thank Dr. Wachter most warmly for this delicate and spontaneous tribute to our popular lyric. Competent judges have read these imitations; they have unanimously recognized that the author had fortunately overcome the difficulties of his task and that his translations, although sometimes slightly unconventional, were worthy of the original. The Society, considering that the publication of these pieces will serve the memory of the Walloon poet, decided to print them. We reproduce on the facing page the text of Nicolas Defrecheux, spelled according to our official system. Text and translation will shortly be included in one of the great literary magazines of Germany and, in this way, the reputation of the one who so purely embodies the dreamy Soul of Wallonia will be spread far and wide.)

Randomness also applies to translation into peripheral languages. It was indeed during a university meeting in the South of France, in Montpellier, that the dean of the law faculty of the University of Liège mentioned to his Occitan colleagues a famous song published by his great-uncle, Vivier de Streel (1799–1863), intitled *Li pantalon trawé*. The colleagues being curious about the song, Jules Feller copied the text and annotated it with philological notes, so that F. Dezeuze could later translate it into Occitan (Languedocien dialect) as *Lous pantalous traucats* (1931).⁴⁶ To our knowledge, the translation has not been published in France (in the target culture), but in the journal *Wallonia* (Liège, 1893–1914)—a monthly journal founded by Georges Willame, Joseph Defrecheux, and Oscar Colson, which advocates, both in French and Walloon languages, a cultural and political decentralization following the model of French regional movements—which also relativizes the potential impact of such extranlations outside of the region.⁴⁷ Here again, the source culture plays a key role in the production and publication of extranlations and the translation context addresses the issue of the networks as compensatory strategies in the face of a lack of official institutionalization.

LITERARY INTRANSLATIONS

Out of the thirty intranlations listed, eighteen translations into Walloon are from central languages (mainly French, as expected) and twelve from peripheral languages, with eight from Occitan and two from Flemish. The main central authors translated are canonical French authors La Fontaine and Molière. In absolute number, assumed intranlations from French are much fewer than expected. An explanation might be that many translations and adaptations from French circulated clandestinely, that is, through plagiarism, and are difficult to trace.⁴⁸

The main peripheral author translated is Frédéric Mistral. In absolute terms, our results show that there are four times more translations from Occitan into Walloon than in the opposite direction, which testifies to an asymmetrical relationship between Wallonia and the *Félibres*. We could ask the question of why such inter-peripheral translations exist, if both Walloon and Occitan intellectuals are able to read and write in French. The hypothesis to reach a popular readership seems illusory in view of the high degree of illiteracy of only dialect speakers. Other hypotheses would be the philological exercise and/or the (random) networking. The latter can also reveal a desire to connect peripheral spaces, realities, and imaginaries, and to organize the literary field differently in search of alternative ways of consecration.

Walloon intranlations must also be situated in a target-context of actions taken to promote and preserve Walloon language and literature. *The Society of Walloon Literature* instituted in 1900 (and until 1950), among its annual contests, a category reserved for translations or adaptations of foreign literature into Walloon. *Traductions wallonnes* by Arthur Xhignesse published in 1910 for instance frames within this context. Winner of the 23rd translation contest of 1907, Arthur Xhignesse received honorable mention. His translating work—a collection of translations of (fragments) of French texts—was considered good enough to be published in Imprimerie Vaillant-Carmagne, in Liège. In the collection, we can find a prose translation of Comte de Buffon (1707–88), the translation of poems written by Valère Gille and Ivan Gilkin (two French-speaking Belgian authors, representative of the modern leading literary movement *Jeune Belgique*), the translation of tales, one by Alphonse Daudet and one by Octave Mirbeau, and the Walloon adaptation of French writer Paul-Louis Courier's letter (1 November 1807).

If this list is quite heterogeneous qua genres, most intranlations concern theater adaptations and short genres, which testifies to a consolidation of existing target repertoire (based on orality) rather than the wish to fill repertoires gaps (with other genres).

LITERARY INTRALINGUAL TRANSLATIONS

The largest part of the corpus is composed of eighty-five translations of Walloon theater into other varieties of Walloon. These translations have been listed in the *Annuaire* for the period 1870–1910, which claims a certain exhaustiveness. These translations did not necessarily result in publications since they were meant to be performed orally. The *Annuaire* nonetheless mentions the names of translators. These adaptations were probably printed in a limited number of copies and distributed among the actors when they played in other Walloon localities. This interesting discovery highlights the predominance of oral literature in broader circles, and also demonstrates the vitality of Walloon languages at that time—a fact largely neglected in the history of languages in Belgium:

On croit généralement à l'étranger que les Belges parlent deux langues: le français, élu par la bourgeoisie, l'aristocratie et les gens tant soit peu instruits, et le flamand, ronron du peuple. Mais on ignore trop souvent qu'il y a encore le wallon.⁴⁹

(It is generally believed abroad that Belgians speak two languages: French, chosen by the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy and the slightly educated, and Flemish, the babble of the people. But one ignores too often that there is still Walloon.)

The existence of such intralingual translations is important to understand the internal circulation of literature and therefore the organization of ultraminor literary spaces. They testify either to a great linguistic variety of Walloons, or to a kind of particularism if we consider that Walloon from Liège could be understood easily by Walloons from Namur, and thus relativize the idea, commonly held at that time, of one Walloon soul and identity. Besides, these intralingual translations blur the distinction between source and target, since directionality is difficult to trace. What is more, if—as suggested earlier—these theater plays come from an original French model, intralingual translation might have resorted to French as an intermediary language. Archive work is needed to get more information on the directionality, nature, and concrete use of these intralingual translations.

Conclusions

Decentralized literary regional movements from the nineteenth century epitomize the complex multiscale process of literary space formatting beyond and in relation to national configurations by their intermediate level of action, between the local and the national. Therefore, studying the circulation of regional culture and literature is crucial to broaden the framework of transnational flows and to account for the multilayered networks at play in the key period succeeding European Romantic nationalism. This article has been a modest attempt to initiate the process.

It is true that the complexity and heterogeneity of the corpus do not allow us to generalize. However, we can cast some doubts over the relevance of Branchadell's "less-translated" concept for the study of horizontal and vertical translation flows in (ultra)minor contexts. So-called "less-translated" languages might indeed be more *translated* than *translating* languages. Just as the concept of minority, "less translated" should be the expression of a relation, not an essence, and relate not only to "*more translated*" but also to "*less and more translating*" languages. This dynamic perspective, which highlights the intertwinement of language asymmetry and translation directionality, would allow for the possibility of measuring the balance of translation flows while mapping the complexity of vertical and horizontal relationships.

Our case study shows an equilibrium between in- and extratranslations, and a large number of intralingual translations, blurring the distinction between these binaries. According to these results, the opposition between "target-language intensive" and "source-language intensive languages" seems rather unhelpful to apprehend the organization of ultraminor spaces. If we only took the (vertical) translations into and from central languages, mainly French in this case, we would oppose eighteen intratranslations and twenty-four extratranslations: Walloon is thus more often the source than the target of translation. This is no more the case for the relationship with Occitan: Walloon is indeed less translated into Occitan than the opposite, which could be explained by the fact that Occitania was a model for Walloon literature that finds itself in an asymmetrical power relationship. Further research should verify numerically and via (para)textual analysis whether intralingual translations are inspired, borrowing, or translating from clandestinely French models. If it was true, these investigations should further check whether the French models are indeed "source" texts or themselves intermediary versions. In any case, our result allows us, on the one hand, to suggest that the relationship between minority languages and literary translations requires more research and, on the other hand, to formulate the hypothesis that inter-peripheral (horizontal) translation practices work as a compensation strategy for the circulation, organization, and sustainability of minority literatures.

Further research is indeed needed since paratextual information related to our corpus is fragmentary and sometimes missing. The storage and public sharing of Walloon in- and extratranslations deserve more attention and should, in time, integrate the *Index translationum*. The question remains as to how to store translations circulating in journals. This is a crucial aspect since journals seem to constitute a privileged translation space for less institutionalized literary fields. In this light, not only should Walloon journals be investigated, but so should foreign and transregional journals such as *Romania* (Paris, 1872-)—a quarterly publication dedicated to the study of romance languages and literatures—or *La Province* (Le Havre, Lyon, Bordeaux 1900–1912)—a journal that laid the groundwork for a large decentralized cultural and literary association and welcomed regional correspondents.

Other categories and materials are thereby needed to investigate the circulation of ultraminor literature. It is time to question the dynamics of the construction of regional cultures from a novel intercultural perspective that highlights the intersections and cultural and literary transfers that, historically, have supported it. If we only consider printed material in books, the circulation of ultraminor literatures will remain misunderstood. Gideon

Toury finds translation into minority language (or weak target systems) an interesting challenge to detect translational mechanism in a more or less bare form.⁵⁰ Concretely, network analysis would play a major role in the study of ultraminor literary space, as we find human networks and mediators at each level of the translation process. Furthermore, the convergence of all the heterogeneous material (oral and written sources, translations, self-translations, glossaries, adaptations, and plagiarized texts) under one “transfer” umbrella concept could reveal useful to understand and envision vertical and horizontal flows.

Horizontal flows allow us to go beyond the common idea of translation for minority languages as an admission of a language’s impotence to be understood and exported. Inter-peripheral relationships, between and within regions, can reveal various motivations: philological interest, surely, but also political and cultural resistance, or the desire and need to connect. Inter- (and intra)-peripheral flows appear both as a means of construction and conservation of regional cultural systems and as an alternative and decentralized attempt to organize cultural life, including peripheral, minor(ized) languages, literatures, and cultures beyond the classical (inter)national artistic and literary canons. They have been organized by a few mediators whose action is worth retrieving from the shadow. Such is the case of Jean Haust or Georges Willame in this study. Further investigation should study other inter-peripheral agents connecting more regions and minorities. Big data approaches and social network analysis would give tools to map and analyze such flows and contacts against the background of transregionalism, even if they are considered “less-successful” stories. In fact, the interaction between success and defeat is fully part of the dialectics of history. Therefore, the study of “less-successful” stories, that is, of cultural voices seeking to engage in intercultural dialogue and cultural identity building that were, at some point, minorized or marginalized, may well offer a better understanding of success stories.

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Notes

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